A Guide to

Foreign Research Reactor Spent Fuel

The Environmental Health Center

The Environmental Health Center is a division of the National Safety Council, an 85-year-old, not-for-profit, non-governmental organization headquartered outside Chicago, Illinois. With some 17,000 institutional members and more than 70 state and regional chapters, the National Safety Council is a leader in accident prevention and home, workplace, auto, and highway safety.

The National Safety Council established the Environmental Health Center in 1988 to help society and individuals better understand and act responsibly in the face of potential environmental health risks. Since that start, the Environmental Health Center has built a strong record of effective, nonpartisan communication on environmental health risks and challenges.

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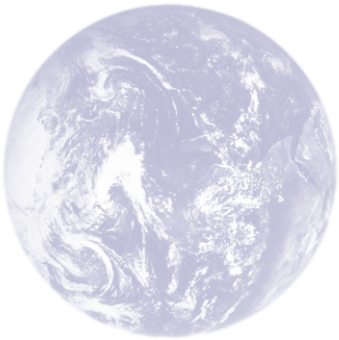

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The Environmental Health Center

A Division of the National Safety Council

1025 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 1200

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 202-293-2270

Fax: 202-293-0032

E-mail: ehc@nsc.org

http://www.nsc.org/ehc.htm

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Preface

More than four decades ago, under the Atoms for Peace Program, the United States agreed to supply enriched uranium and nuclear research reactor technology to nations that agreed not to produce nuclear weapons. The purpose of the program was to promote peaceful applications of nuclear energy and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

As part of the program, the United States agreed to take back used, or spent, fuel containing U.S.-supplied uranium from participating nations. By taking possession of the highly radioactive spent fuel, the United States intended to ensure that the fuel would not be reprocessed to produce nuclear weapons.

In 1996, the United States adopted a new program for taking back spent fuel from foreign research reactors. The U.S. Department of Energy is responsible for managing and storing the spent fuel upon its return to the United States.

Under the new program, which lasts until May 2009, foreign research reactor spent fuel from countries other than Canada will enter the United States at either the Charleston Naval Weapons Station, in South Carolina, or the Concord Naval Weapons Station, in California. From there, the spent fuel will be transported to a Department of Energy facility for storage—either the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory or the Savannah River Site.

This guide is designed to be a resource for anyone seeking information about the current U.S. foreign research reactor spent fuel program and how the spent fuel is to be transported, handled, safeguarded, and stored when it arrives in the United States.

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